

Epiphany

The Schuylkill Valley High School Literary Magazine.

Volume Ten

2017

Epiphany

The Schuylkill Valley High School Literary Magazine

Editor-in-Chief:
Jacqueline Marusiak

Layout Editor:
Ellen Robinson

Art Editors:
Mackenzie Homan
Lindsey Zimmerman

Copy Editors:
Donald Ballou
Lydia Forsythe

Editorial Assistants:
Kylie Brown
Ellen Robinson

Cover Design:
Kylie Brown

Faculty Advisor:
Mrs. Patricia Kramer

Volume Ten

2017

Epiphany

Dear readers, writers, artists, dreamers:

Four years ago, I joined *Epiphany*. As a naive freshman, I had no idea what high school had in store for me, how much I would change, or how much the world would change in my short time at SV. Neither do any of you, readers. However, we can be thankful for one thing that doesn't change: *Epiphany* will be here to provide an outlet for your struggles, joy, heartbreak, confusion, anger, and everything in between. *Epiphany* will be here to cultivate your passions and celebrate your art, and one of the few things that will always be there for you is writing.

And so I've come to write to you here, now a senior and only slightly less naive, grappling for the words to explain how special *Epiphany* is -- how much it means to me and hopefully to you. Between these pages you'll find the creative works of extraordinary people, the manifestations of their dreams and emotions displayed for your enjoyment and your empathy.

On behalf of *Epiphany*'s advisor, staff, and club members, I thank our principal, Mr. Mitchell, all the members of our faculty and staff who have supported us in bringing this magazine to light, especially Mr. Cullen and his Graphic Design class for the publication of our magazine. Thank you to all of those who have contributed and those who continue to read *Epiphany*. It is because of you and for you that we affectionately assemble our literary magazine year after year. Most importantly, may you never stop reading, writing, creating, and dreaming.

Yours,

Jacqueline Marusiak '17, Editor-in-chief

Table of Contents

*Contest Winner or Honorable Mention

Anonymous	Terribly Alone	9
Layomi Adeojo	remember when	7
Emily Angstadt	Photography	1
	Foxfire	30
Rylee Arena	Hello, I'm an Addict	35
Alysa Bainbridge	Sufferer vs. Stigma	14
	*Orlando	42
Donald Ballou	*The Tale of the Mirror	22
Molly Ballou	Stranger on the Road	40
Charanya Birabaharan	The Fine Violin	1
Nate Braucher	Photography	16
Jennifer Brown	There Are Monsters in the Dark	9
Kylie Brown	*Plans for Dusk	24
	*Artwork	30
	*Artwork	38
Bryce Burtnett	The Great Bleed	11
Sydney Ciervo	Photography	2
Elizabeth Clement	Winter	27
Meghan Cook	*Gods of Luck	28
Julia Craft	Skin	34
Elysia Davila	*The Colors of Our Love	33
Rosaly Diaz	Bowl Obituary	44
Lydia Forsythe	Human Tectonics	25
	*Places	40
Nicole Frank	*The Dinner	20
Olivia Gonzalez	Artwork	8
Emily Griesemer	The Fearsome Spider	10
	Photography	28
	Photography	30
Allison Henwood	Walking,Walking, and More Walking	39
Mackenzie Homan	*I'm Going to Write Something Happy	3
Lucas Horrell	*Frostbitten	27
	Focus	41
Hallie Jacobs	Puck	30
Jacob Jerdan	Artwork	31
Malachi Kauffman	Game Winning Shot	26
Alexis Kowalski	Photography	12
Tristan Kucera	Master's Wish	29
Jacqueline Marusiak	*Memories of the Top of the World	25
Michael Matz	The Girl With the Red Hair	19
Yacinda Menendez	Red Pen	5
	Artwork	7
	Artwork	18
Starr Neidlinger	Frozen Honeysuckle	28
	Brawny Beauty	38

	Finally Father	39
Kahlee Perera	Facade	13
Jay Poland	*Photography	25
Riley Pontician	Photography	10
	Photograhpy	37
	*Photography	21
Cecily Ramirez	The Birds	37
Danielle Readinger	I Swear I'm an Honors Student	5
Cassidy Rittenhouse	Difference in Shade	34
Ellen Robinson	*Still Miss You	2
	Photography	3
	Until the Sunrise	15
	Photography	26
	Photography	42
	Photography	42
Soubha Sadiq	Artwork	19
Bethany Schlott	Fine Print	12
	What the Other Side Hears	36
Hannah Seltzer	Belong	17
	Simply Colored	31
Jessica Shomo	Photography	2
	Photography	15
Ashley Spatz	Photography	4
Zachary Stein	*Artwork	41
Kaylee Swain	*Photography	28
Alexis Szymczyk	*Art Imitates Life	6
	*New World	31
Kiara Tolentino	Artwork	29
	Artwork	35
	Artwork	40
Megan Torok	Photography	22
	Photography	25
	Photography	33
Carissa Trievel	Masks: Where We Hide the Truth	13
Kahlan Tripp	*Artwork	24
Kara Unger	Artwork	41
Emily VanderSleen	Photography	30
Kaitlynn Wayman	*Artwork	23
Molly Weidner	*Photography	20
Lily Whitmoyer	*Symphony	1
	Photography	16
	*Photography	20
	Photography	34
Lillian Wiley	The Cat	10
Julia Winkler	a lifetime of love	2
Lindsey Zimmerman	*The Lonely Porch Swing	8
Macy Zimmerman	Release	6

The Fine Violin

Charanya Birabaharan '19

The finest wood
Hollow and sleek,
A perfect shade of cinnamon
A color that strikes the eyes,

A bow made of the finest horsehair
Gently strikes the tightened strings,
The strength of the strings vibrate
So much power
A sound so powerful,
A sound that strikes the soul,

Played when broken hearted,
When most content,
When most confused,

An instrument of elegance,
Sophistication,
And beauty

An abstract piece of art
Played with the most delicate vigorous touch,
An instrument of emotions
Only the violin
Plays with no hidden lies,
Hits the heart,
With such emotions
Can only be played,
With a violin so fine



Emily Angstadt '20

Symphony

Lily Whitmoyer '19

Honorable Mention

So go ahead and tell me
that the music doesn't
flow out of the ignorant
pores of your skin.
Tell me ivory touches
don't soothe the calluses
on your tough leather hands.
Look into my eyes and
tell me the black and white
keys don't comfort your soul.
Let me place my hand
over your rapidly beating heart,
and then you may tell me
goosebumps don’t appear on
your strong arms after you play.
Allow me to capture an image
of you glancing into the distance,
and then tell me you don’t picture
a place like you dream of
when pressing down the keys.
But don't ever tell me
the contradicting melodies
and harmonies we made
sounded well together.
For you are in the key of G,
and I am in the key of G flat.
The only similarity is a single
black key, but even that is a
flat to me and a sharp to you.
I hope you think of me
every time you approach a piano.
I hope the 88 keys
burn your fingers
when you touch them.
I hope this horribly sounding,
terribly off key,
dissonant love
destroyed the music for you.

a lifetime of love

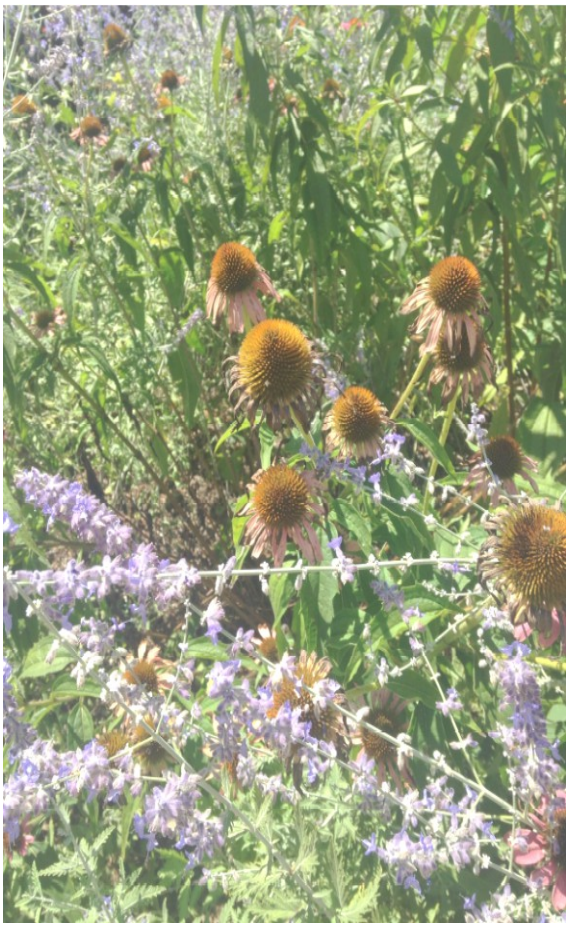
Julia Winkler '20

eyes stretch wide to take in golden flecks of light,
strewn across a pond of stifling black,
the sky subdued, but hopeful.

milky indigo reminds you of summer blueberries,
until the calm is fractured by a bursting sunrise,
all passion and fire, brilliantly warm and bright and alive,
and the rush you feel when the two of you speak is consuming.

then everything is a clear, sweet blue, the best kind of love,
until the sun sets and the palette of reds is too bright for your eyes,
and the golden flecks of light are swallowed by inky night,
and you see heartbreak instead of hope.

but like the sky, the cycle will relapse,
always different, forever tragic, eternally bittersweet;
a lifetime of love.



Sydney Ciervo '19



Jessica Shomo '19

Still Miss You

Ellen Robinson '18

Honorable Mention

When the mauve horizon
collides with the black city skyline,
blotching into bleak midnight,
I'll still miss you,
and when the tears of Earth
plummet to the scarlet rose fields,
augmenting the flower's dew,
I'll still miss you,
and when the sun peeks its golden eyes
over the snow-capped mountaintops,
transforming the lavender of dawn
into the coral of the morning,
I'll still miss you.

I'm Going to Write Something Happy

Mackenzie Homan '18

Honorable Mention

There he goes, ambling down that path again. The sun shines so toasty warm. Rays of it fall golden upon the delicate, freckled shoulders of young ladies. Daring smiles grace the lips of these young ladies and old men alike. He is no exception to this fluttering happiness. There he goes, pattering across the park-- cane, one foot, other foot, cane, one foot, other foot.

The trees cast a shadow onto his chest, causing a quick swirl of chill to prickle his papery skin. He glances up, searching for the hidden sun, and he finds her instead. With her chin tilted towards the sky, he sees her struck by the sun beams as if from heaven. Eyes closed, palms relaxed, loose stance, she resembles a dancer on a stage just before the curtain rises.

The elderly man-- he is enraptured by her youthful beauty. His thoughts are not ravish, but rather views her slender body as a work of art. Lavish clothes, makeup, jewels are rendered useless by her beauty. The riveting dimples of her cheeks are full of something pure and harmonious.



Ellen Robinson '18

He begins to see it. He is actually a handsome young man, his hair combed but not parted, and his shirt giving in the breeze. A small, dashing smile lights his face.

"Hello, there."

"Oh, hello."

"I'm sorry, but I was just walking and well… My feet have seemed to gain a mind of their own. Here I am," he utters, blushing.

"I see that," she says, smiling.

The pair enjoy a date to the theater and ice cream once the movie lets out. The internal fireworks occur after those sprinkled ice cream cones when he kisses her. This time, she blushes.

They live together before being married the following year. It went something like this: As she was off visiting a friend from college, he prepared at home, and waited for the moment she walked up to the front door. A new Labrador puppy all golden with slobbery smiles, greeted her just as she arrived home. Squealing with delight, she discovered a ring tied to the little guy's collar. She said yes.

The wedding seems to take place among the clouds, all white and airy. She floats so adoringly from guest to guest, and he floats on cloud nine alongside her. Vows tell promises of truest love and the cake goes down in history. Oh… And their honeymoon can only be described as a paradise further draped in gold, conducted behind closed doors.

The honeymoon came to an end, but their love never did. The one and half year old puppy yapped blissfully when the love birds returned home. During the next few years, the couple held jobs, made dinner together, traveled here and there, danced in their underwear, and simply indulged in each others' company.

She had one baby girl, even though he secretly crossed his fingers for a boy. What he didn't expect was the intangible, indescribable love he felt for his baby girl. The baby girl slept in a room her parents painted bright yellow to resemble the sun. Even the dog liked to spend his nights just beneath her crib and sometimes stick his wet nose through the bars if she cried.

Both the girl and the dog grew older. And although she no longer slept in a crib or cried for her mommy at night, she shed a lot of tears when the now frail, old doggie passed. But beneath her tears, a smile hid because this loving family gifted a golden puppy with a wonderful life. A life commemorated with a funeral in the backyard and from her dad, a gift to the young girl. The bedazzled frame of her doggie and the girl still sits on her bedside table, now in the city.

Her first year of school served as a distraction for the little girl from her sadness. Mom and Dad worked hard each and every one of those years between kindergarten and fifth grade and ninth grade, and then it was senior year just a breath later. Through it all, the family stayed in their snug house the parents had bought as young lovers. Long after most couples lost their spark, he continued to stare at his wife, enraptured; especially when she stood, relaxed in the sunshine.

Their baby girl moved out after graduating from college, and the couple… they were old but comfortably so. Life fluttered on like a butterfly in spring, and he often surprised his wife with date nights, or she baked him a Sunday morning breakfast unlike any other. With sleepy dust still in his eyes, he would sniff out her banana pancakes before the batter fully pooled onto the griddle.

They did adopt a cat one of those years, but although sweet, no animal ever filled the shoes of their long gone, golden puppy.

A trip to Tuscany served as their last adventure to a foreign land. Taking place in the summer, sunny days were abundant, and he stared at her so much while they were there.

This story called life wouldn't be complete without the chapter on growing old. And the last page of that chapter must contain death. They tried not to be too sad about her sickness in those last few months, and they weren't so sad. The last pages of her life bursted with love for her husband and daughter. For as long as her body allowed, she continued to bake and grow plants in little pots. Oh, and she adored painting on her terrace which overlooked quite the landscape of evergreens and the untamed beauty of nature. He often sat in the kitchen and studied her grace through a window above the sink.

She passed in April, and her last page was written peacefully on a night so full of stars her restless husband knew it would happen before dawn bloomed across the sky. He held her, and as the sun came up, he let her go.

That spring morning was two years ago today. Clutching a cane, he now walks on a path in a park just a twenty minute drive from his remote, slightly lonely, little house. He has plans to meet his adult daughter here, so they can go to breakfast and visit his wife's, her mother's, grave. A cool shadow falls over his body from a tree above just as he spots his daughter. She stands in the sun so graceful, effortless.

"My God, she looks just like her mother," he thinks, instantly reminiscing of the day he first met his would-be wife in this very spot.



Ashley Spatz '18

Red Pen

Yacinda Menendez '17

I grabbed a Red Pen
And I wrote with It
When the Ink runs out
It will End

I draw back to the beginning
The First Stage
The Early Years
It was all a Blur
Yet the Red Ink Continued

Ten Years Pass
Smiles and Laughter-
Frowns and Tears-
Covered in Innocence
Blissfully unaware of where the Red Pen took Me

A New Year
Year Eleven
The Red Pen continues
But no longer a straight line
Innocence and Happiness fading away

A New Year
Year Twelve
The Red Pen continues
Never as straight as it used to be
Sorrow and Despair were born

A New Year
Year Thirteen
For a Moment, the Red Pen stopped-
Then my Breathe began again
I Grab the Red Pen and drew again

Several Years from then
Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen
The Red Pen struggled and Struggled-
Yet the Red Ink continues

Year Eighteen
Will it last?
…
Will the Red Ink run out before that year?
I wonder…

When the Red Ink runs out
It will End
And Never Again
Will I live in Despair

When the Red Ink runs out
I will find my Happy End
I Grabbed a Red Pen
And I Write Again

I Swear I'm an Honors Student

Danielle Readinger '20

So I was back in English class
Tryna' get my school on
Thinkin what I'm 'bouta write
For this lit mag jawn

You see I ain't so sophisticated
But I can surely spit fire
And I thought if I wrote a rap
My grade would surely be higher

To be totally honest here
I procrastinated this so much
So I've been thinkin' on the spot
And my rhymes are comin' in clutch

I'm gonna wrap this up now
It's gonna end on this verse
Because if I write any more
I know it will only get worse

Release

Macy Zimmerman '19

I hastily tear a piece of paper out of my black, spiral notebook. My mind, overflowing with ideas, pounds as I pop the cap off my pen. As soon as the point brushes the page, my head feels like it can finally breathe. Forever held promises, untold secrets, and safely hidden lies spill out through the ink and onto the lines. Reaching back for memories, forgotten moments repaint themselves on the filling up white space. Everything I wish to say, think, tell, and explain flows out with the black liquid instead of escaping through my mouth. Scribbled handwriting scrunches on the last few fading blue lines, trying hard to fit every last detail. Attaching the last period, my soul cleansed, I am freed.

Art Imitates Life

Alexis Szymczyk '19

Second Place Fiction

Michael's strongest memories consisted of family vacations. He could remember his very first taste of caramel popcorn at a little amusement park, deep scratches from wild raspberry bushes in a nature reserve, seeing his face reflected in the glass over an ancient mummy in the local museum.

His stepmother's interest in art had brought them to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Michael did not like his stepmother, and he did not like art. His father and he were content to drift a bit behind her and pass a bag of overpriced museum candy between them.

They were close to the exact center of the museum, when a brightly colored gallery caught Michael's attention. A banner strung across the arched doorway declared the room 'A walk through the ages.

Michael took this to mean that the museum hadn't had any other place for a large group of unrelated art. The walls were covered in paintings and photographs from different places and time periods, and the center of the gallery held an enormous Oriental dragon statue.

Yet the most eye catching part of the gallery was the two girls sitting on the dragon. One of the girls seemed older, near womanhood, and one of them might as well have been a toddler.

The little one had a short, frumpy dress and a very, very short bob haircut that Michael had the physically restrain himself from laughing at. She waved at him so vigorously she nearly fell off the statue.

When he walked up to them, the woman looked at him a bit disdainfully, and Michael thought, pettily, that her skin tight dress might have been attractive if she would lose about thirty pounds. Both of their outfits were very old fashioned, especially the woman's, so Michael assumed they were actresses or something, hired by the museum to promote the exhibit.

The little girl jumped down and smiled widely up at him.

"Bonjour! I am Manon, and she is Jazia! Who are you?"

She had a thick French accent and her voice was high and carefree. Her obviously rehearsed statement and question sequence only solidified Michael's actress theory. Perhaps they were sisters, or a young mother and daughter.

"I'm Michael. You work here?"

The woman frowned deeply at this statement.

"We do not work here. This is our home."

Her accent was European. Michael didn't know much about European languages, but he figured she was from somewhere near Russia.

"How can you live here! This is a museum!"

This time the little girl chimed in, "We're from the pictures! I come from Paris, in 1924, and Jazia is from," She leaned forward conspiratorially, "a time of knights!"

Michael raised his eyebrows. The little girl continued on into a story about her mother, who was a

fashion designer and wasn't home much, would bring her gifts of colorful fabrics or small fabric creatures. Absent mothers were something Michael was incredibly familiar with. His own mother had left his father and him two years ago.

Jazia put a hand on his shoulder, her gold rings flashing. Michael noticed one of them was decorated with a stylized bird, possibly an eagle.

"She loves her mother too much for what she is put through." She gave him a small, wicked smile.

"My parents married me off when I was twelve. I became queen shortly after, as my husband fell ill."

Michael tried for a polite smile. He was suddenly glad his biggest worry was being dragged through an art gallery. *Speaking of which, where were his parents?* Michael thought they might have not noticed him wander into the side gallery.

As discreetly as he could, he excused himself to go find his parents.

Both girls smiled at him, Manon widely and Jazia thinly. When they got up, presumably to return to their 'pictures', Michael noticed a plaque on the dragon statue. '*1190 BC Shang Dynasty Statue. This statue was discovered in the ruins of an ancient temple, and was presumed to attract spirits of the dead.*'

On the car ride home, he told his parents all about his new friends. His parents, being kind and encouraging people, told him it was lovely that he'd met such nice people, and that he had a wonderful imagination.

Remember when

Layomi Adeojo '20

i remember when
you were the epitome of joy
how your eyes disappeared whenever you smiled
and your dimples showed when you laughed

i remember when
you didn't care what others thought
how you flaunted your elegant beauty
and humbly acknowledged the compliments you received

i remember when
your heart was larger than life
how you always gave generously
and never asked anything in return

i remember when
you were my friend
how you always knew exactly what to say
to make me love you, over and over again

i don't remember when
you started to become the person i know now
this being full of spite and depression
who has seemed to forgotten
everything that made you

do you remember then?



Yacinda Menendez '17

The Lonely Porch Swing

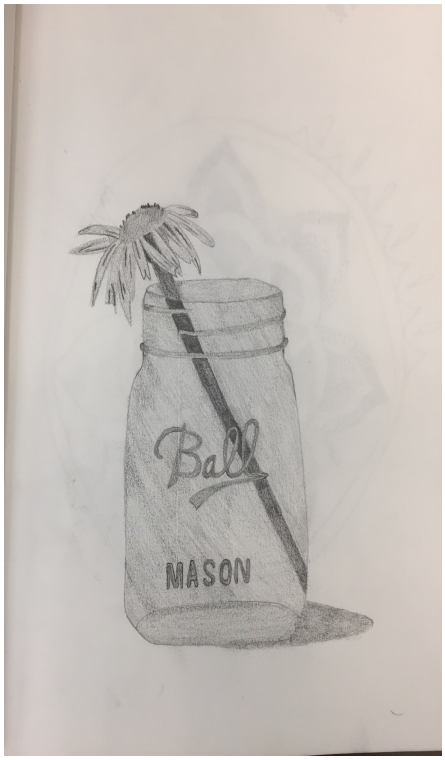
Lindsey Zimmerman '17

Third Place Fiction

He watched the beautifully carved pine swing creak back and forth on its rusty hinges. It looked out of place against the tattered old farmhouse that sat alone in the dusty prairie. He had bought it for his wife as a surprise for their twenty-fifth anniversary. It had taken him several months to save enough money to buy the swing. He had hung it himself before she got home from work, pushing his physical and mental health to please his wife, as usual. The old man reminisced about the day as he twisted open the cap of the rusting red can that seemed too heavy in his hand. He then dumped its contents onto the lovely swing, soaking it before backing down the steps, slowly leaving a wet trail in his wake. Dropping the can to his feet he admired his home of fifty years, the home where he grew up and raised his only child before she left for college. He wished it hadn't ended this way.

He had come home early from an out-of-state cattle sale, sneaking into the house with so much history, flowers in hand, to surprise his still sleeping wife. When he heard the familiar sounds coming from the room he and his wife shared, he couldn't believe his ears. The room had been his parents' room before him and his grandparents room before them. There had been so much love in that room. Now it seemed there still was, but it didn't include him. He peaked his head into the door frame and saw his best friend since primary school with his beloved wife. Their thirty year anniversary was next week. He quickly pressed himself up against the wall, taking a deep breath, shuddering, waiting in the hallway trying to think rationally about what he should do. All he could think about was how hard he had worked to provide for her all these years. The constant and rigorous work had taken a toll on him. He had overbearing pain in his back and shoulders, yet he didn't go to a doctor so he could afford the expensive things she always seemed to "need."

Then, he had an idea. He would forgive them once they atoned for their sins. Once he peeled himself off the wall, he began to walk determinedly to the kitchen. When he entered the kitchen, he grabbed a vase from above the sink, filled it with water, and placed the vivid red roses in the center of their expensive brand-new table. Red roses had always been her favorite. When he had asked her why, she claimed it was because red is the color of passion, and she always wanted to live passionately. He walked calmly to the safe, punched in the combination that was imprinted in his mind, and pulled out a revolver. He grabbed his cable ties that were normally used to string up deer, knowing that they would come in handy. He no longer felt like himself as he loaded the gun. Click. Click. Click. He knew what he was doing was necessary, and it filled him with a feeling of self righteousness, as if God himself was telling him to do it. He turned for the stairs and took them slowly, deliberately. He was in complete control of his actions and could stop anytime he wanted.



Olivia Gonzalez '17

He returned to the happy couple who were now laughing and cuddling in each other's arms. The man stood in the doorway waiting to be noticed. She saw him first, jumping up to defend herself and claimed that it wasn't what it looked like. He snorted, wondering why they always say that in the movies when it couldn't possibly be anything other than what it looks like. He didn't want to hear it, so he aimed his gun and shot her, once, straight through her knee. Now she couldn't run away. Then he turned to a man who had been like a brother to him, aimed his gun again, and shot him through the knee, just like his lover. Under divine influence he tied up the two people he loved the most.

Refusing to listen to their pleas or explanations, he continued on with his plan, leaving them tied like hogs ready for the slaughter. On his way out the door, he grabbed the rusting can of gasoline, the last step to his plan, before walking onto the porch. The swing was almost enough to change his mind. Almost. He soaked the swing and stepped back to admire his handy work. Thinking back to what he had just done, standing as he was now, he felt a weight fall off his shoulders. He dropped the match onto the wet trail he had made and watched the fire ignite, race up to the porch, and burn the porch swing completely in minutes. The house was so dry from the lack of rain that it would burn down in an hour, perhaps two.

He waited until the screams stopped, feeling satisfied that they had gotten what they deserved and he could now move on, feeling free. He forgave them because they had paid for what they did. He sprinted as fast as he could into the fire, letting it char his skin and melt the fat off his bones. It was only seconds before he died, but it felt like a lifetime as he recalled some of his favorite memories of his fallen friend and dead wife. For a few moments he actually regretted what he had done, realizing that it wasn't God that had pushed him forward, but his own passions. At least his wife died the way she always wanted to live: passionately.

Terribly Alone

Anonymous

She feared being alone
"Is anyone here?"
Not an answer
But the faint sound of unfamiliar footsteps
"**Hello?"**
There is no one to help her
She's all **alone**
The sounds of the **footsteps** get louder
Along with her heartbeat, racing
Out of her chest
She can no longer speak
She is **frozen in fear**
The intruder inches his hand toward
the doorknob, twisting it slowly
"Who is it"
She said, **quivering**
The **last** three words she managed to speak

There Are Monsters in the Dark

Jennifer Brown '20

The dark is not a safe place,
Here in the dark lies things unknown.
Every inch of darkness lies a new fear,
Responding in pulling our covers over our head.
Each child is horrified to see what is outside their covers,

Around their bed,
Roaming throughout the room,
Even in the closet.

Monsters hide in the daytime and come out in the dark.
Obsessed with filling us with fear without showing themselves.
Noises fill the room that we play off as "an old house" or branches hitting the windows.
Some people have nightlights but,
That doesn't give enough light to fill the whole room.
Every millimeter of darkness,
Renovates a new place for a monster to
Sneak around until dark fills the night.

In their bed, they lay awake,
Never leaving a single body part off the bed for a monster to snatch.

Darkness is only friends with the monsters lurking in it.
Are they real?
Really depends on who you ask. Also...
Know that this is an acrostic poem.

The Fearsome Spider

Emily Griesemer '19

Fear walks across my heart…
A twisting and grinding
sensation begins turning
in my stomach
while the fearful eyes
stare at me
daring me
to look away..
I feel the hairy
gruesome
legs
brush against
like a sharp porcupine.
Is that a hint of fang I see?
The monster is going to bite me
sucking my blood as I sleep...
Fear walks across my heart
for a spider crawls across my wall.



Riley Pontician '19

The Cat

Lillian Wiley '20

She wasn't surprised at the hostility of the storm. They had spoke of it for days on end on the television. The way the newscasters made it sound, she was expecting the storm to blow her small cottage away. Bored, she checked the time on the kitchen stove, five until the witching hour. He was horribly late with the lilies.

A small meow called her attention to the ground. The girl lifted the black feline and stroked the small white patch under its chin. The cat squirmed in the girl's arms before darting down the hall. Frowning, the girl followed the cat to the large window in the front of the cottage.

"What is it?" She asked the cat while studying the window. The cat did not reply. Instead, the cat ran down to the front door and out the dog door. The girl called after the cat, hoping to lure it back inside. She feared the storm was too rough for the small creature.

Sighing, the girl threw on a light coat and shoes before chasing the cat out the door and into the blindingly dark night. She called its name loudly several times, waiting in between each call for an answer. After the fourth call, she heard a quiet response. The girl called out again, receiving another response. She crouched near a large spicebush and checked underneath the branches before her heart dropped.

Glass eyes stared up at her, terror locked in their gaze. Vermillion stained the boy's shirt and dripped from his nose and lips. White lily blooms littered the ground. She didn't recognize the boy. Fear iced the girl's veins. She didn't care for the cat anymore, the cat could take care of itself. Rather, she wanted to get inside as soon as possible.

Shakily, the girl got to her feet and began making her way back to the cottage through the dark storm. She needed to call the police and get to safety. As she neared the front of the house, she heard a loud bout of laughter, echoing throughout the storm and bouncing around her skull. The girl quickened her pace.

Finally, she reached the front door. Frantically, she twisted the knob and tried to open the door. It was locked, of course. She didn't remember locking the door. Rain blinding her, she fumbled around in her pockets for the keys.

"Excuse me, Miss," a voice sounded through the noise of the storm. The girl spun around to face a boy, perhaps a year or two older than her. Her gaze snapped to the scrawny creature in the grasp. It was her black cat.

"I believe the cat belongs to you," he mused, "She's awfully pretty, just like you, Clara."

The girl said nothing. Her brain was a muddled mess and her limbs were weak. The boy continued.

"Then again, all pretty things must wilt and die," The boy gripped the cat's throat as a horrible smile overtook his face. The girl screamed and grabbed the boy's wrists, trying to pry him off the cat. She was too late. The cat's spinal cord had snapped, producing a loud crack that cut through the sound of the storm. The girl pulled away from the boy immediately and placed her hands over her mouth. Sobs spilled from her lips as the cat's corpse hit the ground. Her legs have way and she tumbled to the ground as well. The boy laughed at her plight, as though he were laughing at a joke.

Finally, he crouched down and caught her gaze. He pushed the soaking wet hair from her forehead with both hands until they rested on her neck.

The girl's nose filled with the scent of white lilies before ice shot through her spine.

The Great Bleed

Bryce Burtnett '18

Sophisticated black hair, ate by the
metal helmet, eats away at the daring
warrior inside... gnawing away at the miniscule
heart the warrior holds

Out beyond outlier valleys and
unattainable cobble walls,
juts the course of this
chess board; this deliberate battlefield
Pristine enemy lie resting at water's edge,
letting ebb and flow of lake water massage
the iron stomp, conditioning the wild romp

Those damned porcelain spikes glint with
a flair of innocence, gleaming with a
proud shimmer…
Major and minor preparing behind battle lines
are excitable, sharpening their swords and scythes

Warrior calls forth a loud ambush, that ignorant
warrior major... no ears open for his trusted minor;
Hooded archers light tethered arrows, while
grungy blacksmiths tend to the catapults

Effect of such male fury, patriarchal curse,
proves weak, and
the lake's beach, cotton white as enemy's coat
remains undisturbed by any scarlet

Then, out of a sudden wave of fear,
the charge commences, a distant
view of a glorified avalanche as
red eyes glitter the masses

Cabin fever, or more likely beach fever,
infuriates the fury; the spear-headed
creatures are entirely ready for battle and
to protect their innocence

Poor warrior minor, a man of pride,
has his life taken from him first; the porcelain
cone straight through the heart, and stomach, and
neck
Not once, but nineteen times each

Horns glide through flesh and muscle
as if they were sucked candy canes, creating truly
bittersweet kills

The battle is lost by the men in a matter of minutes,
while many unicorns lick their lips with black
tongues

Their white coats are forever stained red

Fine Print

Bethany Schlott '17

"*I will take your last born child.*"

The words haunted me. Though I was gifted immortality and through my own intelligence I must have fooled her, something still felt wrong.

It had been two hundred and nine years since we made the deal–the witch and I. Two hundred and nine years later and those seven words still manage to wrap around my neck and trail behind my guilty back like a cape, lightly strangling my throat with its very presence. What type of mother trades her child for an infinite life? Two hundred and nine years… and she still hasn't come to take my child. This is no accident, of course. I fooled the old witch. I am immortal. Because of this, so are my children. They roam the Earth, entertaining their own personal fantasies. I, however, spend my days evading the witch, protecting my babies. My logic is this: if I keep having children, I will never have a last born and thus, she will never be able to take my last child. While spending my life as a breeder is not how I pictured it to go, it's not the worst. I have heard pregnancy suits me.

Yet, something still feels wrong. I can feel her like a heavy mist dragging its deathly veil across the valley to where I wait, trapped. I can feel it.

. . .

"Colette, my old friend, how have you been?"

"Monster! Get away from me!" she cried, rocking the lifeless body of her last born in her arms. A mere babe, such a shame.

"I've come to celebrate! You've finally fulfilled your dues," I clicked my tongue. "Good girl. Now you may live on forever, unburdened. You will be barren, of course. Couldn't have any more of your little rascals wreaking havoc, now could we?"

"He was only a month old. One month!"

"You had a debt, dear." She stilled at my words, gazing into the boy's blank eyes.

"You killed them all," her words were merely a whisper, "my children. Why?"

"I believe we had a deal. One that you agreed to."

"You said… you said you would just take my last born. Not all my children! And you killed them! That's not taking!" Her voice had become hysterical. I was bored.

"Why indeed it is. Taking a life, I presume, but still taking nonetheless. What use would I have for one hundred and seventy-nine children? Child slaves are rather mundane, I've learned. And I've grown tired of watching you spawn them off like an animal. You fool, thinking you could outsmart me. At some point in your life, every single one of those things were your last born. I never said I would take your current last born. Fine print, dearie." I waved my hand and turned my back on her, "they all had to die. You're free now. You're welcome, I'm sure." I laughed and sauntered away, calling over my shoulder to the idiot girl: "Fun game! Call me if you want to play again."



Alexis Kowalski '19

Facade

Kahlee Perera '19

Suppose I were to write what I feel…
truly,
inside,
rather
than hide.
Consider that the tears I cry are real…
clear
and wet,
filled
with regret.
Imagine me living a life that's most ideal…
perfect
and bright,
not a raindrop
in sight.
Watch my painted smile start to peel…
faded
by the sun.
I'm coming
undone.
Now my cracks and chips begin to show…
and you see
what I mean.
I'm not as happy
as I seem.
You've found my bitter heart is full of woe…
and hatred,
and gloom,
my inevitable
doom.
Inside, I am a mess, and now you know...
I'm a cracking
porcelain doll,
a kingdom
about to fall.
No longer can I tolerate this throe…
I hate
to say goodbye.
Well, that's just
another lie.

Masks: Where We Hide the Truth

Carissa Trievel '18

There's a certain safety we feel
When we hide behind a mask we least want to reveal
The good or the bad
The carefree or the sorrow
The lost or the perplexed
Each day we put these mask on
Hoping that no one will notice how we are underneath
Underneath is another story
Our faces covered in tears and broken pieces
That cannot be glued back together
We are sad and lonely
Having nobody to comfort us
So we wear a mask that always smiled
To hide our feelings behind a lie
Deep inside we still feel empty
Like we are missing a part of ourselves
We designed our mask to hide the lies
Nobody could see the pain we were feeling
We designed our mask to be laughing
Behind all the smiles were the tears
And behind all the comfort were the fears
Everything you think you see
Was not everything there is to us
Day by day
We are slowly dying
We feel as though we cannot go on
There was something missing
Until now we are still searching
For someone who'll erase our fears
For the person who'll wipe our tears
But till then, we will keep on smiling
Hiding behind this mask we are wearing
Hoping one day we would not have to use the mask
But they love the mask, but we cannot breath through it's lies
They love the mask, but we cannot see through it's eyes
They love the mask, but we cannot speak with it's tongue
They love the mask, but we cannot hear when it's on
Masks aren't just for hiding the bad
Sometimes they hide the good too
So which are you hiding?
Or is the mask hiding something from you?

Sufferer vs. Stigma – Two Voice Poem

Alysa Bainbridge '17

Sufferer	Stigma
Get me out of my head.	Get him out
	of this town.
I'm convinced	
	He's completely crazy.
I'm crazy What's wrong with me?	What's wrong with him?
I have too many	
	He's causing so many issues.
issues. They think I'm	
	He's simply a criminal.
a criminal It's not just	
	It has to be a phase.
a phase. I can't	
Just get over it. I feel like I'm slowly	
	They act like he's dying.
dying It's not my	
	It's his own fault.
fault. My poor parents	
	His poor parents Should be ashamed
Never asked to have an ill child. They did all they could	
	They should've done a better job of raising him right.
to raise me right. I have issues.	The kid has issues.
I should probably	
	But let's not
Talk about it.	Talk about it.

Until the Sunrise

Ellen Robinson '18

I was an empty slate sky, stuck in a colorless sunset. The sun never rose to drown my sorrows in brilliance, and the moon never showed a dimly lit face to illuminate my thoughts. The only color in the black and white sky was a garnet tint of my bloodshot eyes.

She was the sunrise, ignited in tangerine and ruby. Her perfume smelled sweetly of radiance and nature. The moon brightened ebony night above her. New constellations formed in the sky with her glance.

I saw her in the halls every day, but the black holes in my eyes were never strong enough to attract the galaxies in hers. Until the day I planned to say goodbye to the colorless world. Until the day she taught me what sunburn felt like.



Jessica Shomo '19

I still don't know why, and I suppose I never will, but one day, her star-dusted eyelids were across from mine, bright hazel eyes boring into my soul. I stopped. So did she.

She spoke. Words floated from soft lips as she spun a brilliant tale of forest adventures and sunlight. She asked me to join her.

After school, she grabbed my hand, her soft fingers and my stiff palm. She led me down the long, gray hallway and into the day.

She led me behind the school, across the roads, and into a small forest. Then, she stopped and dropped my hand, which fell to my hip. I stood, beside her, in the center of an area enclosed by trees on all but one side. The trees rose high into the light sapphire sky; the branches outstretched, desperately reaching for something new. Emerald leaves contrasted the sky. A soft breeze stirred the wood. A single leaf drifted to Earth. I laid out my hand, and it landed softly in my palm. The grass beneath my feet was vividly juniper and soft. A clear crystal lake lay on the open side. The breeze rippled the water. Flowers bloomed alongside the lake. Their amethyst, magenta, and marigold tones glimmered against greens and blues.

"I planted those," she pointed toward the flora.

"They're beautiful."

"Thanks." She paused. "Look up."

I glanced upward and a single cloud floated across the sky. She began humming softly.

"What am I looking for?" I asked.

"The sky. It's blue."

"I noticed. It's beautiful."

"Colors you've never seen before, right?"

I didn't answer. She didn't need to know about my black and white world.

She kept going. "I see you every day, but I don't even know who you are. You looked like the kind of guy that needed an adventure. I discovered this spot about a year ago. I come here after school and in the summer."

I still didn't answer. Instead, I walked to the lake and crouched and dipped my fingers into the water.

"There are fish in there. They're quite beautiful actually. So many patterns and colors." She waited for me to speak, but I didn't. "I used to be like you. I never wanted to talk. The world used to seem so cold and lonely. So--"

"Black and white," I interrupted as I stood.

"Yeah, black and white."

We lay back on the soft grass and looked up to the sky. It was beginning to take a pale coral tint.

"Have you ever seen a sunset?" She asked.

"No."

She sighed. "But you see this wood in color."

"I've always seen you in color, too."

She blushed. "It's not me. It's the forest. I found it when wandering one day. I wanted to die but found this place. It was beautiful, and all of a sudden, everything was okay."



Lily Whitmoyer '19

"You're lucky to have found it."

"I know."

We turned our attention back to the sky. Sapphire became rose and peach and daffodil, before quickly turning to ebony.

"The best part about sunsets is they happen every day, and each one, more beautiful than the last. But so do sunrises." She spoke softly.

The stirring of the trees and the soft pulsing of the ground lulled us to sleep on the soft juniper grass.

I awoke to the silence of sunrise. Ebony slowly turned to pale azure, streaked with iris and blush.

"Have you ever seen a sunrise?" She whispered.

"No." I answered.



Nate Braucher '17

Belong

Hannah Seltzer '18

Him

4/23/3001: We collided together creating massive sparks that sent ice through my veins. I pulled her up from our uncomfortable state and let my eyes rest on hers. Her icy skin tone gained color but only in her cheeks, and her eyes thanked me. Stuck in the moment, she burst through the silence and sprung from my arms. She made her way down the street, looking over her shoulder as she reached the corner and locking eyes with me. She shouted, "I'm sorry!... and thank you!"

5/01/3001: Warmth surrounded me as the sun shone through the library window, warming one side of my face. Grabbing a random book from the shelf next to me, I read the first words, "For my future..."

"Is this seat taken?"

I shifted my body hearing the familiar voice I longed to hear since our first meeting. "I was saving it for you."

5/04/3001: I slept easily, drifting off with thoughts of her. When will I see her again?

5/05/3001: Usually women walked through the park on rainy days with umbrellas, with sour expressions and frizz terrorizing her hair. She seemed to glide elegantly on the path. Strangers stared at her as our fingers intertwined. I proudly accompanied her through the park.

5/12/3001: I continued to wonder where she came from and how she ended up with me. Her veins, too cold to be human, still entwined under her skin. I felt the ice in them when I touched her.

Her

4/23/3001: I fell from my upright position destined for the concrete when he suddenly grabbed me. His warmth seemed to burn through me, raising my core temperature. A small strand of his golden hair flopped in front of his forehead and his lips smirked slightly. His stare poured into me. Breathless, I returned the gaze, then quickly continued down the street. I looked over my shoulder as I reached the corner; I had forgotten to thank him. My eyes locked to his. Forgiveness sat in the corners of his eyes, and I waved, "I'm sorry!... and thank you!"

5/01/3001: For days I wondered if I'd ever see him again. I was too cold a soul to be warmed by love; Sitting in caverness library, populated by a few blank faces seemed calming. I silently read my book as a beam of light caught the corner of my eye. I saw the sun reflect off his golden hair. My icy veins tensed. I snuck over and sat in a chair close by. "Is this seat taken?"

Without giving a second thought, he replied; "I was saving it for you."

5/04/3001: Sleep barely took me by dawn. I peeled myself from bed. Thoughts of him made me weak, drained. Being with him made me this way, but why do I feel the need to be with him again?

5/05/3001: Droplets slid down the surface of my cheek. The frozen rain caressed my hair, knotting it together. I felt weaker than normal. My fingers tingled, touching his. The park was filled with strangers. He accepted me for what I was, different.

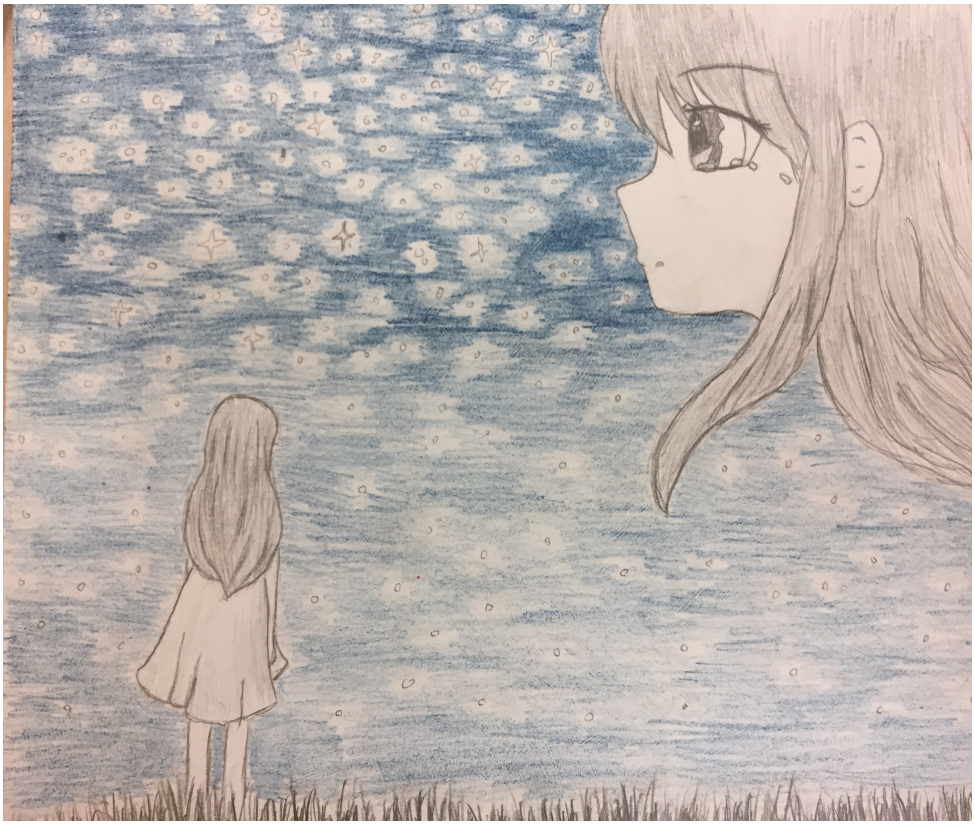
5/12/3001: I know my skin is cold and my heart is frosted. He can love me with his whole heart and more, but it would never be enough. I crave his warmth, but it's eating away at me. Why do our hearts seek out the love that is bound to fail?

5/14/3001: I called to tell her that I adore her, but she never answered, I've left embarrassing messages confessing my love to her, but she won't reply. I missed the chill she placed in my blood. She belongs with me.

5/15/3001: Pressing my palms together, looking down at my feet, I tried to compose myself. I inhaled slowly, warm air filling me. I held my fist in the air then knocked on the door. I heard the doorknob turn and the hinges creak. I saw her beautiful eyes sagging under the weight of unhappiness. She flung her arms around me, desperately clinging to my shirt. She dug her face into my neck and cried softly. I put my arms around her and pressed my lips to her head. I pulled away, lifted her chin, and saw sadness. She tilted her head down to hide the frown that softly sat between her eyes. I pulled her close again and heard her faint whisper between sniffles, "You know I don't belong." She broke our hug. I noticed platinum strands of her hair fallen onto the back of her shirt as she walked away.

5/14/3001: The incessant ringing haunted me. I clutched the arms of my chair as frost formed at my fingertips. Warm thoughts crept in, but I quickly shut them out, freezing my damp body to my chair.

5/15/3001: I'd isolated myself for days. A faint knocking sound sent my body into shock. I pulled myself up and walked solemnly to the door praying he had not come. I lifted my fingers to the doorknob and turned it cautiously. I swung open the door and paused; This wasn't a dream. I threw myself at him, sinking into his warm embrace. He lifting my eyes to his. I let go of his hand, but he embraced me again, shutting me down. I was weak in saying, "You know I don't belong."



Yacinda Menendez '17

The Girl With the Red Hair

Michael Matz '19

Just a goodbye
From the girl with red hair
Distracting thoughts, my mind stops
From a pain I can't bare
But that girl occupies my mind
The space that's rare
And I let it happen
For the girl with red hair

Emotional ties
To that girl with red hair
Memorials to days
When my soul had not a tear
Every boy that she's dated never
really cared
But I want that to change
For the girl with red hair

There's no sadness
From the girl with red hair
Just uncomforts and rough starts
Work your way down the stair
The souvenirs of talking
Conversations we've shared
Daily laughter, running after
The girl with red hair

No connection; your perfection…
Do you ever look in awe at yourself?
Because I do
You say goodbye
It's beyond repair
Emotional ties
To the girl with red hair



Soubha Sadiq '17

The Dinner

Nicole Frank

1st Place Fiction



Lily Whitmoyer '19

1st Place Photography

I turn to my wife, fist raised to the door. "We can still cancel, say you got the flu. If we turn back now, we can pick up a pizza and still catch the game."

"Now that's just awful, Rich, the man invites you to his home and you're just awful," she exclaims.

I figured she'd say that.

I turn back to the door, that damn door. My coworker Jim is behind that door. Why he had decided to invite my wife and me to dinner is beyond me. We aren't very close at work; maybe the occasional "Hello Jim" or a "Morning Rich" with an acknowledging nod of the head. And yet here we are, standing in front of Jim's with a store-bought dessert in hand.

My fist knocks on the door, the echoes silence any further attempts of canceling the dinner. Jim's wife answers the door and politely welcomes us into the apartment which opens up to the dining room with an old oak table set and six matching chairs. A lock of hair continues to fall into her face as she nervously fidgets with the tablecloth, adjusting the dishes and silverware though everything is already perfectly set.

As my wife follows Jim's wife through the door straight ahead to the kitchen to help finish preparing for dinner, I look around. I faintly remember a Christmas party Jim hosted last year for the company, but the open setup in the apartment seems only vaguely familiar. To the left is a door that leads to a room, probably the bedroom. The sound of the TV clicking off draws my attention to the right where there is an open doorway revealing the living room; part of the right wall is a half wall.



Molly Weidner '19

Second Place Photography

Jim enters with a grin on his face, a hand extended in greeting. "Hey, there Rich! I'm glad you and the wife could make it," Jim exclaims, shaking my hand and guiding me to the table. His wife backs out of the kitchen with a roast in her hands. As she sets it down in the center of the table my wife comes out with some steamed broccoli. Once we are all settled, Jim rises to slice the roast and places a hearty piece on each plate. My wife commends Jim's wife on the roast while the vegetables and side dishes are passed around.

While Jim and our wives make polite conversation, I conveniently keep my mouth full, contributing only nods and grunts. My mind is on the game I'm missing, and my eyes wander around the apartment. Looking through the open doorway to the living room, I notice an oddly blank part of the wall. The rest of the apartment is decorated

with knick knacks and paintings and pictures, but one patch of wall by the fireplace is bare. My wife patiently repeats a question I hadn't heard, drawing my attention back to the meal.

The table is cleared, and we move to the living room for dessert and drinks. Jim and his wife insist we sit and enjoy some cake while they clean up. I nod and turn to the bottle of scotch on the coffee table. My wife has to be reassured no help is needed before she joins me.

"See? Isn't this a nice evening Rich?" my wife questions earnestly as she cuts even slices of the cake. "Jim and his wife are just lovely, and the food was wonderful. I for one am glad we came for dinner." I have to admit the roast was delicious, but I am still thinking about the game which is definitely over by now.

"Sure honey," I murmur, taking a seat by the fireplace. It looks like one of those electric ones that don't actually have a real flame. The blank spot on the wall catches my eye again and I move to take a closer look. Marks from where the wall had faded around picture frames were there, as if an assortment of pictures were taken down.

I sit back down thinking about the missing photos. As hard as I try, I can't remember if the pictures had been up the last time Jim had invited us over. Any memories of the party are blurred by the drinks that night and time. I mull over my scotch as the bare spot on the wall consumes my thoughts.

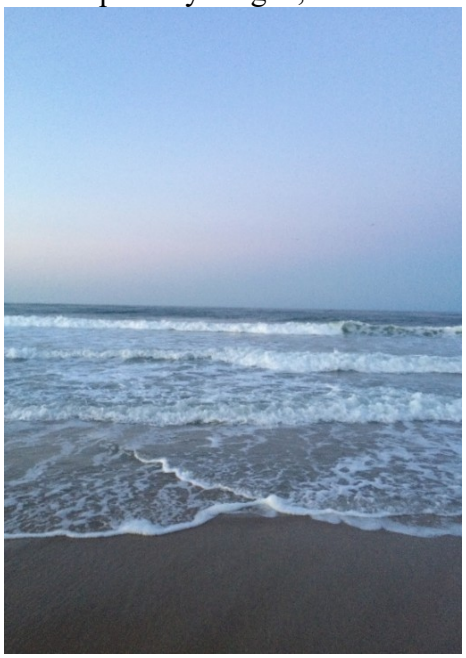
When did Jim take down the pictures? Was it recently or did he take them down a while ago? Looking at the fade marks I can't tell. What caused them to be taken down? Is it because of who is in them? Had someone died in the family or maybe a friendship broken off? I try to rack my brain to think if Jim had mentioned anything that might relate to the photos. For once I wish I listened to him more often. Could they be down because company is over? That seems a bit ridiculous. What could be in the photos that Jim wouldn't want us to see?

The question that bugs me above the rest is whether I had seen the pictures at the Christmas party, but am unable to remember them now. I scarcely remember the apartment, let alone what photos decorated the walls. Did I once know what is in the photographs, but not care enough to remember? Or did Jim take the pictures down long before I even knew him? The question of how I can't remember burns in my mind.

I hardly notice when Jim and his wife return. The rest of the night is a blur of talking and light drinking. Countless times I debate mentioning the wall, the question on the tip of my tongue, but I hesitate a beat too long whenever the conversation lulls. The evening is coming to a close and I still haven't asked.

Jim's wife grabs our coats for us as we make our way to the door. We say our goodbyes and I help my wife with her coat. A promise is made to have another get-together soon, perhaps lunch at a nice restaurant. I shake Jim's hand, start out the door, and pause. This is my last chance to ask. There is no certainty that I'll ever be at Jim's apartment again and too much time will pass to ask before I see him again at work. Even then, it would seem odd to remember such a minute detail. I turn to Jim, but something holds the words back.

I had spent the evening pondering those missing pictures, reveling in the mystery of it all. I thought of every scenario that could explain their absence and yet none of them fulfill my curiosity. As the seconds pass I feel my opportunity slipping away and yet I can not persuade myself to ask the question that has been on my mind all night. In those moments I realize the mystery of the photographs appeals to me more than any explanation could. Satisfied with my discovery, I simply nod to Jim and leave without a word.



Riley Pontician '19
Honorable Mention

The Tale of the Mirror

Donald Ballou '18

Honorable Mention



Megan Torok '19

Once upon a time, a princess was trapped in a tower. Not at the top, but at the bottom. She didn't know that, though. She didn't even know she was trapped in a tower. She only knew her room.

A single mirror hung on the opposite side of the room from her bed. It stretched from ceiling to floor, and widthwise took up about three or four feet of the wall. The stones of the wall around the mirror traced around its edges.

The mirror provided the princess with her one and only companion: herself. She tried to play games with her reflection, but Hide-and-Seek and Imagine seemed to be the only ones that worked. Tag and Catch proved to be difficult with a friend who could only stay within the confines of glass. The princess spent every day with herself, reading stories about princes, white horses, dragons, and triumphs. She told her secrets and all the gossip on her stuffed animals, and always offered her friend some of her supper. After all, if a princess was to be rescued, she'd need to be everything a real princess was: polite, poised, and pretty.

About four thousand, seven hundred forty-five days later, the princess was dusting her room. She dusted above the mirror and was surprised to watch gravel and stone fall from the wall. After standing on a stool to see what was uncovered, she discovered an inscription. She deciphered the message. "Thy own savior shall cometh in time," she read aloud. The princess became energized and curious. She started to wonder if something outside of these walls really did exist. Would a prince really come and rescue her, like in the books?

Weeks passed, and she started to regard the mirror differently. The princess's fondness for her friend in the mirror didn't seem as genuine as before. She didn't play with her as often, either. Instead, the princess's thoughts drifted toward why she hadn't been rescued yet. Each day she had more disdain for her friend in the reflection.

A month after discovering the prophecy above the mirror, the princess had totally forsook her one and only friend. She no longer looked at how she was dressed, or if her hair was up-to-par. Instead, she focused on her problem of isolation. In fact, the princess was so consumed by the idea that she may not be rescued some day that she ignored everything else in her room. One day, she became so tired of looking at her reflection that she draped a heavy blanket over the mirror.

Approximately one thousand, eight hundred twenty-five days later, night had fallen on the tower. The princess was huddled on her bed with covers up to her chest. Loud claps of thunder shook the stone walls, and strong winds caused the tower to sway and groan. One particularly large thunder clap caused the tower to tremble, and in the aftermath the princess heard a gentle swoosh. She uncovered her head and looked about, braving the darkness. Everything was almost pitch black, save for a silhouette of light around the mirror. It was from this light that the princess could see that the blanket had fallen. A cloud of dust reflected the luminescence, stirred up from the blanket by the fall.

The princess stared face to face with her old friend. She looked upon her with resentment. “You,” she declared with narrow eyes. “You’ve been no help at all! You’re good-for-nothing, worthless! Don’t you want me free? How could you just stay there and do nothing?” She turned back and stomped to her bed and plopped down. She faced the wall, but then turned back to the mirror. “Nobody even cares to come save you! Look at yourself, you’re not special!” The princess turned and started to crawl across the bed with a snarl on her face. “You think you deserve it? Ha! Why do you deserve such a thing? Princesses are polite, poised and pretty. You’re none of those! You’re nothing!”



Kaitlynn Wayman '18
First Place Artwork

She was on the floor now, still making her way to the mirror. “‘Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder?’ Ha! Behold! I declare thee ugly! Ugly and horrid!” The princess had tears in the corner of her eyes and she huffed. She glared at her old friend. Then, she reeled back a fist, and with a great cry she struck her. Cracks split up her reflection’s face. Then she struck again with an even angrier scream. Cracks split up her body. Cracks split up her room. Cracks split up everything she knew. Each strike emitted a louder, angrier, more frustrated yell. She pounded the mirror and her hand was cut and bloodied. She slid down the mirror, and rested her head on the broken reflection and cried. Then, as one last surge of utter frustration, the princess slammed herself against the mirror. She let out a battle cry and hit with all her might.

The mirror broke. The mirror shattered. The mirror opened.

The princess fell into brilliant light as she collided and became one with her reflection. She flew through the mirror with glints of crystal and landed in the shadow of the great tower. The princess raised her head, glass falling from her head. Wet grass and blue skies greeted her. Deer fed in a meadow in front of her, and flowers poked out of the glistening terrain, inviting bumblebees and butterflies. The princess stood in amazement, trying to take in her new reality, and then heard a terrific clash.

A young boy, about her age wearing almost the same clothes as her emerged from a tower opposite of hers. Shattered diamonds lay about him, and his eyes were puffy from salty tears. He slowly looked up at the scenery, just as amazed at the marvel in front of him as the princess was. He stood and turned and saw the princess.

The princess and prince walked toward each other, bare feet gliding through the wet ground. The couple smiled and held hands. The prince wiped glass from the princess’s hair, and she blushed and did the same to him. She ripped a long strip of fabric from the bottom of her dress and wrapped his bloodied hand. The prince did the same for her, and they walked a path, bandaged hand-in-bandaged hand.

Plans for Dusk

Kylie Brown '17

1st Place Poetry

I'm building a treehouse
A sturdy wooden escape
With my drawings carved in the walls,
And platforms to stand in the highest branches
For endless adventures.
I'm building a treehouse
With planks for a ladder
That wind around the trunk,
And a long slide
For quick escapes into drifts of soft leaves.
I'm building a treehouse
With a grass-woven rug,
And a pulley
For buckets of water,
And a wooden swing
For hours of daydreaming.
I'll nail the boards up good and tight
So the walls can hold me in.
But I'll leave the roof off
And if I'm lucky,
The stars will come to visit
And watch me read and climb and swing,
So that night can't stop my treehouse play.



Kahlan Tripp '17

Third Place Artwork

Human Tectonics

Lydia Forsythe '17

Squeezed, melted, and crushed
The rock survives the stresses of its creation

Although intact, did the rock choose
its composition? Its form? Its color?

Did the rock aspire to be a bright geode
instead of a dull, solid, common lump?

Squeezed, melted, and crushed
she survives the stresses of her creation

How much choice was she afforded?
Assets? Location? Aptitude?

Squeezed by the presses of economics and competition,
what defenses will she resort to?

What would a boulder, comprised of rocks such as this,
look like?



Jay Poland '19

Third Place Photography

Memories of the Top of the World

Jacqueline Marusiak '17

Honorable Mention



Megan Torok '19

Every fall when I was younger, my mother took my sisters and I on a road trip to visit my great grandfather and great aunt in Hershey, in their small house settled on a tall hill. We piled into our minivan and drove about an hour and a half, which seemed like a lifetime to four small excited children crammed into the backseat. “Don’t even ask me if we’re there yet,” my mother would say; we knew better than to test her. The moment when we finally arrived at the base of the steep hill was our favorite part; throughout the long and steep ascent the car jerked and shook so forcefully that we all were squealed in fear and excitement.

After greeting my great grandfather and great aunt, we all stepped outside to greet the fresh mountain air. Hawks sometimes circled overhead; unknown birds squawked in the distance or sang melodically, to our delight. All along, the soft wind blew, lifting sweaters gently, playfully tickling the

napes of necks. If you stood just off to the driveway and looked down, you could almost feel nature pulling from the center of your body, threatening to send you tumbling down. I sometimes imagined it, hurdling surely to my death in an exhilarating fall, bound to hit dozens of tree trunks rooted to the side of the hill. Pale yellow leaves dusted the gravel driveway and dry grass, fallen prematurely from the early autumn trees. The small brick house existed in a circular clearing; if you walked straight from the house in any direction, a dense forest would envelop you, enchant you, whisper its secrets. A thick layer of leaves crunched underfoot in the dense canopy, clearly used in years past, but now abandoned. The woods gave a strong aura of nostalgia, of small children grown and sweet memories locked away. On one path a hunter's perch clung to a tall tree, nearly invisible amongst the foliage. A red aluminum barn sat waiting, long rusted out. A small garden plot rotted, crops dead, fence eaten away by deer and rabbits. Over years of many storms, numerous trees stood with stripped bark and fried branches; some even split down the middle, or hung over the path. As children, we searched for these fascinating landmarks again and again, retracing the steps of our family.

If I close my eyes, I can still smell the fresh air, hear the harmonious singing of the birds, stretch my arms out and feel the rough bark of the forest, standing at the top of this hill, the top of the world.



Ellen Robinson '18

Game Winning Shot

Malachi Kauffman '20

I should have known better
You weren't ready for the pressure
Why didn't I take the shot
Right there on the spot
I could have won the game
Instead I stood there in shame
Their team was cheering loudly
Our team sat there cowardly
Their coach was thrilled
Our coach was chilled
I should have known better
You weren't ready for the pressure

Frostbitten

Lucas Horrell '18

Second Place Nonfiction

Out in the crisp, frosty air of a late-fall afternoon, my brother and I stand in our barren backyard, screened by dark green cypress trees to the west while open alfalfa fields lie eastward. The grass, still frozen solid from the early morning dew, crunches under our feet as we race to catch footballs soaring in every known trajectory to man. Thrown high beyond reach, briefly ascending to the stratosphere, the pigskin sails through the dense atmosphere, cutting cleanly through the gales of December. Finding rest in the foliage of an evergreen tree, the projectile shakes a handful of pure, white snowflakes loose, which gently blanket the ground as they complete their descent.

We run our legs into Jell-O, yearning to reclaim the elusive football before the other brother. Like a lion sprinting across the Serengeti, I fly past my kin at a ludicrous pace to fetch what lies waiting in the boughs of a tree. I achieve sweet victory. Springing from a low-hanging branch, I pluck the pigskin from its high rise, startling a family of robins out of their lazy slumber. Darting for safety, they haphazardly drag tinder and sawdust from their nest into the easterly wind, which carries the infinitesimal bits towards the last glimpses of sun, their silhouettes vanishing into the night. My brother and I, however, grow fascinated by an even more beautiful sight. At the early hour of five o'clock, the moon unabashedly seizes the afternoon skies, out-competing the crimson, smouldering sunset with an intense lunar glow. One can see the moon with such clarity that each individual crater, canyon, and mountain displays itself to the naked eye. While the spectacle created by such a bold moon steals the foreground, Jupiter and Mars flicker in the darkening background. Before long, light gives way to navy blue skies dotted with black stratus clouds, obscuring our football from view. Surrendering to the darkness, my brother and I exchange one last toss before leaving the raw, arctic air of a December night. As we seek refuge within the comfort of our own home, my brother and I tacitly revere the warmth afforded by the fireplace, the silence only broken by the fire's intermittent crackles and howling wind from beyond our shut doors.

Winter

Elizabeth Clement '18

I missed you, Winter. I missed your cold touch in the early morning and the stillness you brought to the night. Others may not appreciate you and the harmony you bring to the world, but I await your arrival every year.

When I step outside, you greet me with your lovely bitterness. The Wind joins you, rustling the beautiful, emaciated trees. I suddenly shudder, my instinct betraying me. You may believe I hate you, but as the cold settles into my bones, my soul smiles.

Closing my eyes, I listen. The Wind speaks, whistling and dancing with the trees again, this time knocking a few of the remaining leaves from their perch. They say farewell to the trees and hello to the earth.

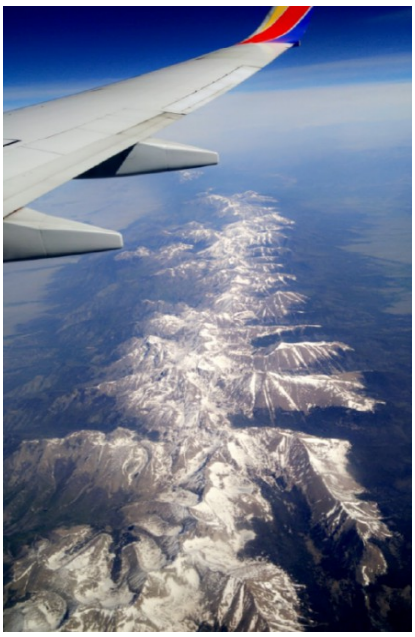
I breathe you in with the world. Unlike the hot, muggy Summer that clouds my chest, you open it and prickle my throat. You circulate through my blood, turning it into ice.

I'm bundled up however. Sometimes your overpowering love hurts me. My fingers, toes, ear, and nose are poisoned by you, my body screaming in protest. My mind fights back, but my body continues to beg me. Obeying this time I walk indoors.
I will be back Winter. Please stay for a while longer.

Frozen Honeysuckle

Starr Neidlinger '19

Stark in icy fields
A frozen honeysuckle
Shivers in frost's breath



Emily Greisemer '19



Kaylee Swain '17
Honorable Mention

Gods of Luck

Meghan Cook '19
Second Place Poetry

I do not pray for mercy
or love
or happiness
I do not go to church
with all the hundreds of other sinners
whose only goal
is live in the next life
I do however pray
not ritualistically
or even very often
But when I do,
I pray to luck
For every unending day to have one miracle
To run into the right person at the right time
To pass a test without studying
To look better than I do in the mirror
To let the words fly from my head
and onto the page
And although sometimes it seems
That these pleas are never heard
But other times
I get lucky

Master's Wish

Tristan Kucera '19

"Auxiliary, I wish for gold to end my discontent."

"Good Master, gold will not forever mend your unhappiness, but only enlighten you of lesser joy. Gold shall not deliver your plight. For your plight, like the earth beneath your feet, exists now, it cannot fade. For, your desire transforms the human mass into a device far greater than any 'thing.' One with choice, one with willpower, one beyond substance Truly, you wish not to remove discontent, you wish to remove being."

"Perhaps, I instead wish to remove being to end this, my grievance."

"Indeed you do not. You 'desire,' thus you wish to remove yourself from your current state. To wish the removal of being is to yet wish. If you remove being, then you can no longer wish to do so. With the fulfillment of a wish, you always gather a replacement. In removing being, you can no longer wish. If you cannot wish, then you cannot be content. You cannot wish to have or be nothingness, because nothingness cannot desire."



Kiara Tolentino '18

"Then, why do I still desire nothingness?"

"You still do not, I might say. You infer improvement comes from nothingness in your current being, however, you wish upon a lack of understanding, in truth. We cannot understand nothingness, it transcends wisdom. Imagine, because you find this universe unenjoyable, you would try to move to a new one. The basis of another universe differs from your own, thus if you traveled to another one, most likely, you would cease to exist. Nothingness possesses infinite distance from our own minds. It is not 'peace and quiet,' for we people created the ideas of peace and quiet. The experience of nothingness lies beyond human mind simply by the fact not one has ever experienced it to then report back to us what it was like. Instead of nothingness, you desire a different state of being. Dread lies upon you thick so that you do not decide what it is you actually desire."

"Have I strength to rise from dread?"

"Indeed."

"How?"

"That is your craft in toil, master, and not mine. I will note, dread depends upon the variety of the individual for its cause. We are different, you and I. You have gone articulating your mind, while I have gone articulating my mind. The same mental event occurred, yet, somehow I answered, as you asked. Now I ask, will you think of rising from dread?"

"I think I ought to, moreover, I shall."

"Then you shall rise from dread. Merely thinking how to escape suffering helps you out of suffering a greater deal than you imagine. As for my part, I do wish for your wellness in this venture."



Emily VanderSleen '19

Foxfire

Emily Angstadt '20

there is a fox
walking through thin snow
over the cement-
pap-pap-pap
paws on rocks
He taps on my window-
tap-tap-tap
The fox is knocking.
His fur is red,
like the fire that died hours ago.
The snow outside glitters
Like tiny crystal tears…
tap-tap-tap
He stares at me,
eyes wide,
probing, prompting-
Liar's eyes.
But I am blind
I do not see the lies in his eyes
I do not hear the danger in his claws
clicking upon my window.
I know this fox.
He is familiar to me now.



Emily Griesemer '19

Puck

Hallie Jacobs '18

Mystical fairies
Of the night
Take flight
For the hour
Is nigh
When I come
to fly
And spread my mischief
For all to see
With a dash
Of magic
Your eyes will close
And you will
Enter a realm
Only I can control
Throughout your slumber
The challenges you face
Will be dire
But when sunrise comes
I clean up what was done
And once you awake
From your dreamlike trance
You will never tire



Kylie Brown '17
Hnorable Mention

New World

Alexis Szymczyk '19

Third Place Poetry

What if instead of looking at the world
the way we expect it to be,
we found new ways to look at the souls
of the colored space around us.

I think it would not be quite strange enough
to see a cloud of insects dance,
to the wicked beat of the stretching sun,
whose taut rays slither.

Beneath the shining melody
of a cloud's game of prismatic tag,
the trees direct hundreds of inflections
with their whip like batons.

And the creatures of the world
weave cascading harmonies;
so beautiful the wind composes
wails of bereavement in the lapses.



Jacob Jerdan '18

Simply Colored

Hannah Seltzer '18

Green glazed glass shattered on cobblestone lanes,
Drunken bar fights on late weeknights,
Long work days insistent on early mornings.

Red rose buds blooming on street corners,
Small cuts on lovers thumbs,
Unplanned kisses on cobblestone streets.

Yellow yolks sunny side up on late summer balconies,
Forehead kisses left on bedhead hair,
Consistent smiles between lovers eyes.

Purple plastered window panes crossed on polished window fronts,
Lazy lilies crushed under catnapping kittens in flower boxes,
Radiant rays hung over railings on brick porches.

White collared copycats with slicked back strands under greasy fingers,
Oblivious housewives wither in loveless ovenmitts,
Cold dinners die at the heads on lonely tables.

Orange wood pencils placed under mind numbing notepads,
Broken tips under stressed writers-blocked writers,
Crumpled papers rolled under dusty desks for old ideas to rot.

Pink cheeks flushed like floundering fish,
Strong willed silence kept by little tikes toddling,
Single tears slithering, sauntering from cheek to chest.

Silver saturdays seeking sombering stock brokers, selling themselves on side streets,
Lonely voices lost under lonesome bridges,
Poor hands holding hope in hopeless places.

Blue dazzling diamonds in darling store windows,
Newlyweds shop, searching for sterling studs,
Glowingly gazing into glorious futures.

Black lies busting through broken hearts on winter eves,
Rose tipped noses sniffling in first snowstorms,
Frozen tears found in crowded ice rinks.

Gold set gold diggers dine at distinguished dining tables,
Acrylic accents on narcissistic nails,
Boasting beautification from embellished bottle blonds.

Lavender language languidly living on tongue depressed tongues,
Cat claws caught on wounded words,
Stuck in the middle of mediocre mishaps on small street sides.



Megan Torok '19

The Colors of Our Love

Elysia Davila '19
Honorable Mention

Her lips were red.
A pair of freshly ripe cherries
hanging delicately
from their mother tree.
They dangled in a tease,
and I picked them like I always did.
Their taste a sweet surprise at first
That twisted into sour dread.

Her skin was gold.
Soft and speckled
with constellations
made up of stars of brown and red
scattered across her glowing face.
A sight that, I once thought,
no matter how many times I saw it
never seemed to get old.

Her smile was yellow.
Bright as the shining sun,
on a warm, calming day in May.
It once chased away clouds of grey
that brought melancholy showers,
and hid happiness from me.
Soon, the sun hid too.
The more foul words came out,
the less the sun came about,
and then skies weren't so mellow.

Her lies were green.
Ill with dishonesty,
she spewed the vile vomit
All over the room.
It coated the bed with
A sickening, toxic atmosphere.
She choked on it
gagging helplessly with each breath
Until her case collapsed
and she finally came clean.

Her tears were blue.
Rivers of aquamarine
And rapids of lapis,
Streams of sapphire
and torrents of turquoise
flowed down her face
along with the honest truth.
While beautiful,
Her gems had shown before,
Her "nights out" were nothing new.

Her arms were black currant.
Contusions formed in sporadic patterns.
Oval welts of aubergine
With a hint of raspberry
Where my fist had pressed her skin.
Her skin turned to jam under my pressure,
Which I had forgotten
Even though this circumstance was oh, so recurrent.

Our love was grey.
Violent storms thrashed at us,
And while I was smart enough to bring an umbrella,
she sat in the midst of the rain.
Stupid, idiotic girl, hair plastered to her face.
Loving her became more of a chore
As I tossed her yet another umbrella
Every day.

Her heart was black.
Cold, dark, wrong.
If only she acted accordingly.
If only she wasn't *ignorant*.
If only she was perfect,
Maybe then my actions would be wrong.
Maybe then I would regret each attack.

Difference in Shade

Cassidy Rittenhouse '20

Ocean blue
Salt water burns your throat
As you bob in the water
On the cool August day.

Winter blue
Makes you shiver
In this bitter frozen land
Alone with your thoughts.

Cool blue
Is tranquil like a bluebird
In her nest, warm and at peace
resting softly.

Sky blue
With a perfect shade-giving tree.
You relax on the checkered blanket
Enjoying a basket of blueberries.

Hydrangea blue
Flowers with delicate petals
And sweet aroma
Swaying with the gentle breeze.

Skin

Julia Craft '20

Skin of different colors
Of different shades
Skin of different textures
Of a different phase
The skin keeps us in
Our thoughts our words
Our prejudices and stereotypes
It keeps in all the good and all the bad
It keeps you from being judged for who you are
And instead gets you judged or how you look
It's a burden and a hindrance
But a protector and a savior
It's a piece of clay
For it's molders
And it's makers
It's a canvas
For the creators
It's a memoir
That can tell a person's story
Or can hide the true person
It can send a message
About a person with no words

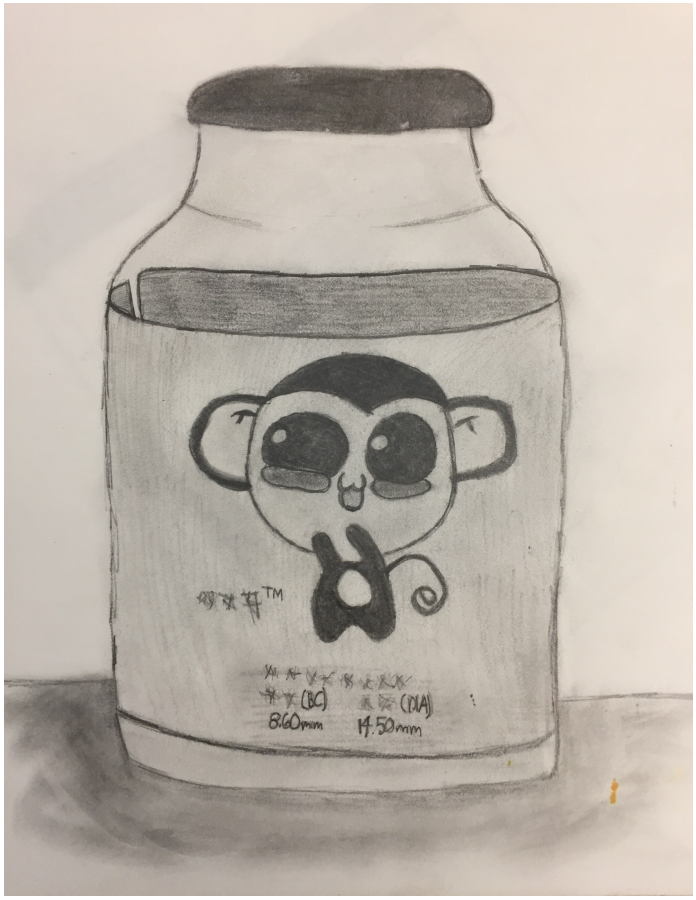


Lily Whitmoyer '19

Hello, I'm An Addict

Rylee Arena '18

Hello, I'm not an addict.
I hide behind judgment, approval, and conformity.
I believe the media
And basically everything anyone says to me.
Hello, I'm not an addict.
I don't think for myself, I live mindlessly
And yet no one seems to disagree with me.
Hello, I'm not an addict.
I stare at a screen at work all day,
Then I catch up on the news and social media,
And basically rot my life away.
Hello, I'm not an addict.
I complain about everything-
How the world is against me,
And yet I don't change a thing.



Kiara Tolentino '18

Hello, I'm an addict.
I smoke three packs a day.
I know it isn't good for my health,
Yet I do it anyway.
Hello, I'm an addict.
I get drunk every night,
Sometimes during the day,
And I can tell it pushes my family away.
Hello, I'm an addict.
I smoke crack cocaine,
So I can be confident, and euphoric,
Yes, I know it's a short-lived gain.
Hello, we are addicts.
We've been through the rehab, the therapy, and pain,
Yet you think you're so much better than us,
With your ordinary brain.

What the Other Side Hears*

Bethany Schlott '17

"One nation
Fallen into despair and decay,
Will eradicate completely
From the face of the earth.
Mothers and children trapped,
Ripped from their homes,
While
Washington flourished.
Struggling families
All across our land,
Scattered like tombstones,
Forgotten
And
Ignored.
For many decades,
America
Has
Dissipated over the horizon.
Now,
The time for empty talk is over.
America
Will
Bleed
At
The
Hands
Of
American labor.
We will make America
Prejudice
Again."

"One nation
Striving
For
One glorious destiny.
Through
This American carnage,
We
Will start winning again.
America
Will be
United.
Now arrives the hour
Of action.
We
Will be
Unstoppable.
Remember,
All Americans
Fill their heart
With the same dreams,
The same red blood of patriots,
The same
Courage,
And goodness,
And love.
Together
We will make America
Great
Again."

*every line is a quote from President Donald Trump's Inauguration Speech

The Birds

Cecily Ramirez '18



Riley Pontician '19

With every flutter, he felt himself pulse with anger. Fear. Envy. Grief. His heart was a thick soup cooked to the point of boiling. If he lifted the lid, he would boil over, and that can't happen.

"Don't ever let them see how they get to you."

His father was wise and cold. So accustomed to the knocking and pounding of people desperate to open the heavy doors, only to drink him up, leave a mess, and disappear forever. Eventually your river runs dry and you run out of patience to clean up the mess. You build a wall to muffle the pain of the sudden disappearances.

His mother was a traveler. She packed her life in a suitcase and left for a new journey. Looks like she left behind some essentials. Months have passed, and she has yet to remember them.

With every flutter, he felt himself draw closer and closer to the edge. Almost boiled. He lifted his pen to his journal and squeezed the blood from its vessel. Crumpled paper scattered the tattered, stained carpet. Chewed up words too bitter to swallow.

His father stumbled in, scruffy and pungent. He glanced at the bleeding pen and the black hand gripping it. He stared at his son for a moment, the two of them without words. His father slowly seated himself on the creaky mattress. He stared at the floor as if the stains in the carpet withheld the words he was searching for. Wet coughing interrupted the silence. A nearly inaudible voice lifted from his father's lips. An apology. Empty and rehearsed and stale. Spit out too many times. The excuses are buckets under a leaky ceiling after heavy rainfall: effort to calm the drips is always absent. His father expected the sound of the drips to become white noise to sensitive ears.

A bright white setting sun listened in on the conversation as the son glared at his saturated hand, a reminder of how his father permeated his mind and poisoned him from the inside out. He wished he had skin of stone: unbroken and unbreakable. Thoughts raced through his head. Shame over what he was, and anger that he was not more. Stronger and tougher. Thoughts were soon interrupted by a shattered mirror. With eyes sealed shut, the son inhaled the screams and felt the strong breath against his cheek before he felt the warm knuckles. Hard bone and callous skin and drunk anger, crushing him like a fallen tree. He should've been accustomed to this routine, but somehow it's always surprising how hard it hurts at first and how the aching, sore, burning sensation sticks around afterwards to remind him of his powerlessness. This time, though, once is not enough. Twice will not suffice. Three times won't cut it, either. The blushing sun grew uncomfortable and decided to hide behind the hills rather than be a witness.

Now, along with a shattered mirror lies a shattered adolescent. He feels nothing. He feels everything. He stares through the window, every flutter now comforts him rather than angers him. The wings he envied are still desirable, but he watches the birds and feels peaceful. The son achingly pushes himself up from carpet, now wet with fresh stains. He lifts his trembling hand to his open lip and finds a red companion to mingle with the black blood. A dry chuckle escapes his lips. The birds reassure him of his decision. He packs his life in a backpack and leaves in search of a new journey, guided by the flutter of the birds.

Brawny Beauty

Starr Neidlinger '19

A strength that is as mighty as a crashing, raging river
And a brawny gallop producing earthquakes with each landing hoof,
Causing the ground beneath to quiver.

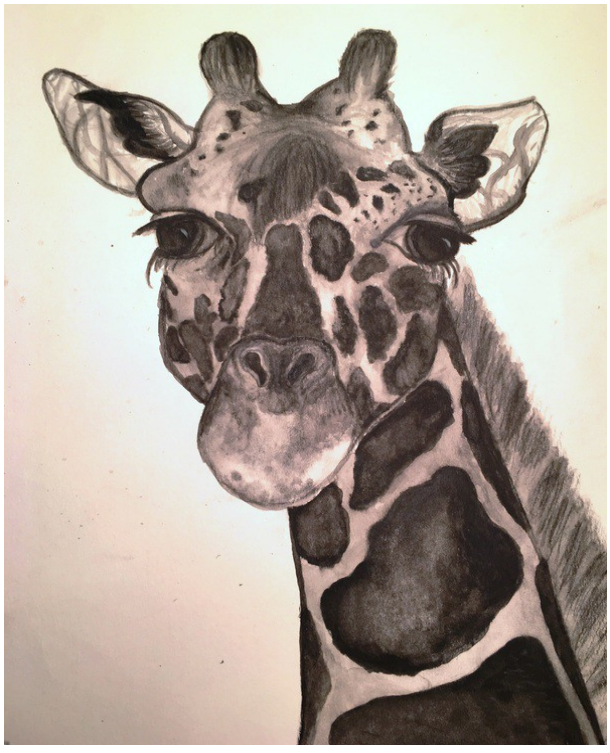
Only he can reflect a quiet beauty
He glistens the way sunlight kisses water,
Luscious raven black hair that flows in the wind like the creation of waves upon the surface.

Zephyr sweeps the sweet grass of the rolling hills from his soft, breathy whinny,
And in beatific spirits, you will see him cavort
Overtaking the landscape, blustery currents surge through with each enraged snort.

In burning love and fear, he protects his home.
You'll never see him bolt from challenging danger,
Never bows down to a nearing stranger.

Never can vanish as his soul lives in the scarlet poppies clustering the earth
And with each refreshing breeze, seeds carrying a new life such as the womb of a mother, find a home for birth
As his spirit is rooted into a new beginning

Through weakness and in strength, with every breath, and with every stride
A Friesian stallion,
The spirit that can never be broken.



Kylie Brown '17
Second Place Artwork

Walking, Walking, and More Walking

Allison Henwood '20

It's pouring and storming,
And my socks are all wet.
I have to walk my entire street,
I'm not even walking a pet.

My dad won't pick me up,
And I'm exhausted from school.
Rain is dripping from my clothes.
I feel like I'm in a pool.

Dad please come get me,
And wake from your dream.
I'm getting even more wet.
Now the street is just a stream.

I also have to walk my driveway,
And that's about a mile.
I'm a very slow walker.
It will take me a while.

I'm almost there,
At the very top.
My driveway's a mountain.
I cannot stop.

I'm now at my house,
And I open the door.
I see my dad on the couch,
And he makes a really loud snore.

I go back to my room,
And I change my clothes.
I put on dry socks,
So I can warm my toes.

I'm now warm and dry,
And to my sister I say,
"I know our dad works a lot,
But do we really have to walk everyday?"

Finally Father

Starr Neidlinger '19

6 years, 5 months, and 11 days
It has been much too long
since I was able to hear the voice of my father
a storm of emotion
but not once had the thunder rolled
203,472,000 seconds
since the last time I saw him
nothing I could do about it
except try not to let it be much of a bother
Letter after letter
not able to hear my dad's voice
After 3,391,200 minutes
talking to him on the phone
made my heart swell
droplets of jubilation fell from my eyes
and cascaded into showers
After 56, 520 hours
no longer shall we have to deposit our voices
through ink
onto paper as our documented conversations
6 years, 5 months, 14 days
until I was able to be in my father's arms again
It took everything I had not to burst into tears
too many days, months, and years
without hugging him
203,785,200 seconds
and I finally saw my brawny, 6'3, talented, and tatted
dad
After 3,396,420 minutes
spending time with Dad
made my heart become more and more whole
one of the very few moments of joie de vivre
I had ever experienced
After 56,607 hours
talking face to face
my heart was beating apace
with the exhilaration
Finally, Father
Finally, the time had come
it has been much too long
nothing can ever change
that I love thou
I love you, Dad

Stranger on the Road

Molly Ballou '20

When I look in the mirror, I see another person.
I'm not sure who it is, or where they are going,
but I know they have a destiny,
and I know that someday I will be able to understand the mind,
opinion,
and reasoning
behind this stranger's personality.
Picking up pieces of the past,
I'll walk the road of thorns to success.
With a bloody hand,
And scarred past
I will grasp the rose of eternity
Doing whatever it takes along the way
To keep taking just one more step.



Kiara Tolentino '18

Places

Lydia Forsythe '17

Third Place Nonfiction

The headset pinches, but it no longer bothers me. I don't notice the hair it rips out anymore, nor am I bothered by the sharp sound of the call button that used to ring in my ears. I love the bulkiness of it; the weight on my head is a comfort I seek. I love how it presses snugly against my ear, like a tight hug from a friend. I love the faint crackle I can hear because people are breathing into their own headsets. My headset feels like home to me after spending countless opening nights and following performances sporting it.

There is nothing quite like opening night. The excitement of calling "places" is an adrenaline rush. Familiar lines, beaten to death in rehearsals, become new and captivating. Laughter and applause breathe life into my lungs. I thrive on the thrill, the rush, the exhilaration of opening night. The feeling of butterflies turning in my stomach and the slight tingle in my extremities is like no other.

I crave my corner, nestled in the wing of stage right, hidden behind masses of black curtain and sheltered from the glaring stage lights. Total darkness, save for a single flashlight to illuminate my script, surrounds me. Complete silence, except for the excited whispers of the actors, fills the darkness and feels like an old friend. Warmth hangs in the air, which provides a sense of ease that I need when I am high strung. My corner, small, dark, quiet, is nothing short of tranquility in the midst of chaos.

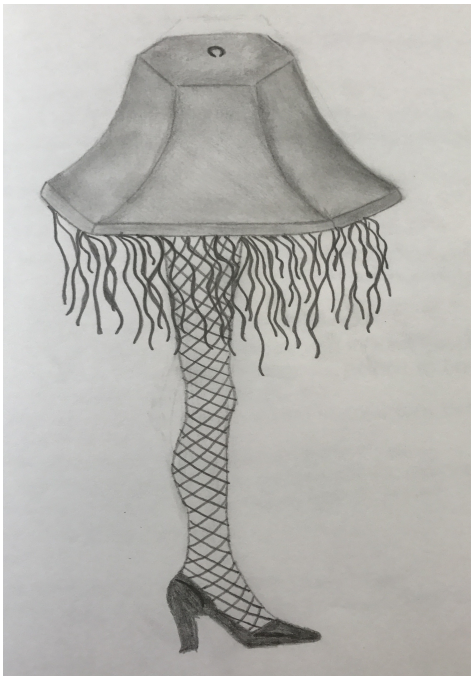
These feelings of exhilaration, excitement, and renewal make the long, almost endless, nights of hard work worth every minute. The backstage is my home and I live for the moments I get to breathe in the dusty smell and flick the lights off and call "places."

Focus

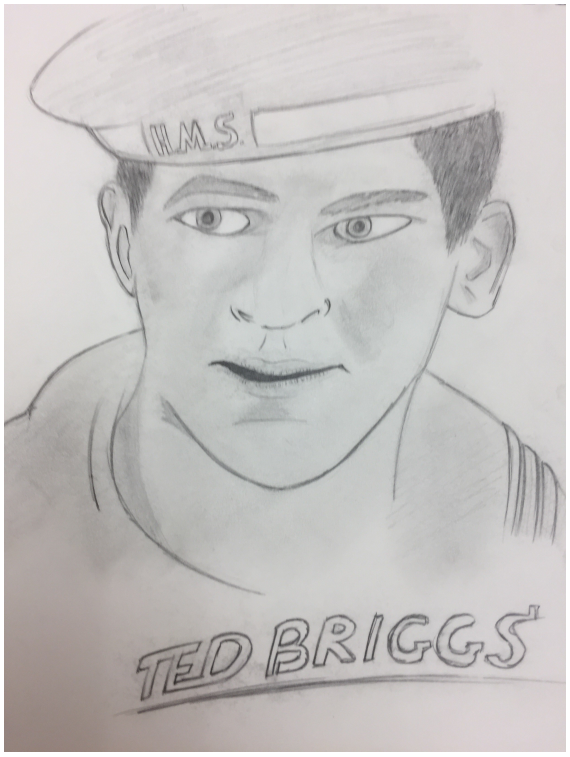
Lucas Horrell '18

Covered in frost from the early winter dew,
I break the ice off of your stone-cold window.
Pulling out my keys, I commence ignition. You
Spring to life, hungry for pavement, ready to go.
Tentatively shifting gears, hearing the song
Of a well-oiled machine, a cranking drive shaft,
You creep out of the cave, prepared for a long
Journey. Lying still with a cautiously rotating crankshaft,
The gear shift rockets forth, and you pounce
Onto the open road. Churning and burning, the motor
Revolves at breakneck pace while cylinders bounce
With the explosions of ninety-three octane. Pedal to the floor,
You harass innocent homeowners with your quake,
A sonic boom, the result of a squealing brake.

The smell of combusted fuel pervades the air,
Mixed with a hint of scorched tar. But you
Take no notice, concerned with riding hair-
Pin turns, your steering column guiding true.
In a merciless gale, frigid wind bombards
Your windshield, howling as it divides itself
Upon the air dam. With the end in sight, cars as
The lone obstacle, you surge through the masses, deaf
To the tune of rubbing brakes and sounding horns.
Down the highway, you catch a glimpse of
Your archenemy: The Red Light. Its disapproving scorn
Fails to faze you; as if by divine intervention, shoving
Into the turn lane, a timid green arrow reveals
Its sly smile; you meet it with roaring wheels.



Kara Unger '18



Zachary Stein '19
Honorable Mention

Orlando

Alysa Bainbridge '17

First Place Fiction

It was one of the most emotional days of my life -- and it occurred while with fifty strangers, all from different states, hundreds of miles away from home. My week at Miss America's Outstanding Teen was near its end. The day before the final night of competition, the producers had awarded the fifty-one contestants (from all fifty states and Washington, D.C.) a hiatus from fatiguing fourteen-hour rehearsals and nasty blisters provoked by the six-inch heels that we were not permitted to take off. We were excited to visit the Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital and SeaWorld in Orlando, the pageant's host city. We expected a fun and stress-free day for the first time in eight days, still oblivious to the shock we would soon experience, before the day even really began.

We exited the chilly air-conditioned hotel for the first time in what seemed like a month and entered into the dense, sweltering Orlando humidity. All fifty-one of us boarded the shuttle that looked more like a Bieber bus with its bowling-alley print velvet seats. I tried to sit with a different state each time we rode the shuttle, so this time, I took the aisle seat next to Rhode Island, a petite girl with a naturally pretty baby face and a dirty blonde bob haircut. As usual, the shuttle bustled with cackling teenage girls discussing the day's probable events and comparing their hometowns, girls surprised by how diverse they were despite living in the same country. The shuttle was as frigid as the hotel -- that's just how it is in Orlando-- you're either melting or in need of a winter coat -- so Rhode Island and I sat with our arms folded across our chests as she recited a few of the jokes she performed for her talent.

Giddy giggles and poised conversation halted when the bus driver, strangely nonchalant, announced over the loudspeaker, "To our right is Pulse Nightclub." At first, there were a few stifled "Huh's?", but deafening silence soon invaded the bus. I looked out the window, having to lean over Rhode Island, whose hands were clasped at her mouth. My heart fell through the bus floor and onto the road below as recognition set in. The appropriately-colored black sign, the only object standing tall in the scene before me, contained simply the word "Pulse" in white, capital letters. I recognized that single word as the one that had been plastered on all newspapers, magazines, and captions, voiced by sullen newscasters only weeks earlier.



Ellen Robinson '18

Though the complex was relatively new, its ominous demeanor made it seem ancient. The inside of the building was pitch dark, allowing no eyes to look in and witness the remnants of the horrors that had occurred there. The outside kept no secrets, though. The windows were still shattered, reduced to random, bare pieces of jagged glass. Wood planks formed a criss-cross lattice pattern across what used to be the entrance to a place that was supposed to inspire inclusion and stress relief, the same entrance a laughing group of friends used, looking forward to their exciting night, not knowing that it would be their last, the

same entrance a fiery-eyed gunman and first responders last used. Flowers filled the space formerly used as a parking lot, hundreds of them, the only splashes of color on the property. Along with them lay framed portraits of innocent, smiling, youth lost too soon. Standing in the street behind the yellow tape that lined the perimeter of the property stood what appeared to be fifty people, some weeping into a loved one's shoulder, others on their knees in prayer, and others still staring blankly at the haunting scene before them. The driver momentarily broke the seemingly eternal silence and made an announcement that there were *always* people there, all day and all night. Among them, I saw mothers, brothers, friends, and lovers. I saw grief.

Rhode Island sobbed uncontrollably beside me, gasping for air as she tried to stammer about an article she read had on the victims' lives and their families' remarks. Vivid images from the stories I had read drew themselves in my own mind as I stared at a scene I never expected to see, except in movies. These horrifying scenes contained people hiding in bathroom stalls or behind the bar, calling their mothers for the last time, others surrendering themselves for their significant other. Ear-piercing screeches and desperate cries for help echoed in my brain. I imagined dried blood encrusting the floors and walls inside the building in front of me. I felt light-headed and distinctly felt a sensation similar to that of an insect crawling down my spine. I shivered. Rhode Island continued to whimper beside me. I wrapped a freezing arm around my weeping bus mate, too shocked to formulate tears of my own.

The bus ride remained eerily quiet --only a few stifled whispers-- as we traveled to the children's hospital, which was only a couple blocks away. It was then, for the first time that week, that I realized that although we were all from different corners of the country and our homes felt so isolated and different from one another, we were all the same. Though unfortunate, it is tragedies like the one in Orlando that break any existing boundaries between us and bring our country together as one. We all grieve the same. All fifty-one of us, from Alabama to Wyoming, were "Orlando Strong" that day.



Ellen Robinson '18

Bowl Obituary

Rosaly Diaz '19

Cereal Bowl
Reading, PA
Cereal Bowl, 7 years old, made in China,
passed away on August 12, 2016.
It was owned by Rosaly Diaz De La Rosa.
It was occasionally used by any member of the De La Rosa family for soup--which annoyed its owner to no end, seeing as she used it strictly for cereal. She dealt with it, of course, as she imagined she often did the same when she visited their houses. It was loved and very wanted during its short 7 years of age. The bowl died when its owner was drying the dishes and putting them away. The bowl slipped from her fingers and crashed to pieces when it reached the ground. It turned into a lot of little fragments and one big one. The owner will never forget the feeling of helplessness that crept upon her as she realized that was the end of Cereal Bowl Occasionally Used For Soup. It is missed.



tijmen van dobbenburgh/FreeImages.com